

Senate Committee on Local Government

March 4, 2009

Testimony for HB 061 sponsored by Representative Jon Sesso

SENATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

EXHIBIT NO. 3

DATE 3.4.09

BILL NO. HB 61

Chairman Esp and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Kim Crowley and I am director of the Flathead County Library System. I am in support of HB 061.

This legislation will give more flexibility in helping libraries take advantage of resource sharing. As you may know, Montana libraries are funded well below the national average of \$32.21 per capita. In the Flathead, as a matter of fact, we are funded at 1/2 of that amount--\$16.00 per capita. I'm amazed and proud, however, of what Montana Libraries can offer their constituents with their current budgets. And all because of resource sharing.

Flathead County is a member of the Montana Shared Catalog as well as the Partner Resource Sharing Group. In Fiscal Year 08 Flathead County libraries loaned 20,315 items to other libraries around the state. We borrowed 39,444 items from libraries as far away as Miles City and Glendive. Our customers love having access to the over 500,000 items available through the Partners system and we hear from them daily how pleased they are.

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Voting in favor of HB061 will allow more libraries across the state to reap the benefits of this type of resource sharing as well as pave the way for more innovative projects. In these hard times it is essential to have the flexibility allowed by HB 61. I urge you to vote in favor of HB 61. Thank you.

Kim Crowley, Director

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